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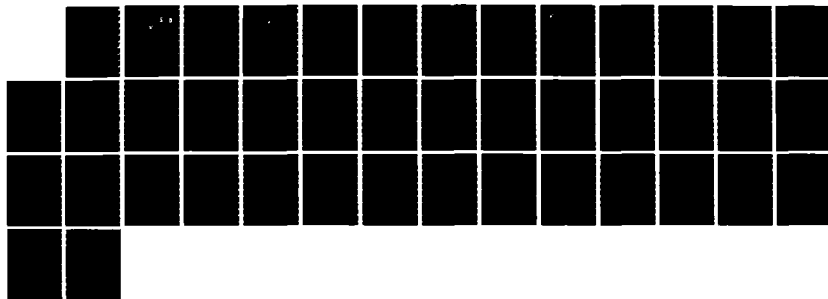
THE CONCEPT OF COMMAND LEADERSHIP IN THE MILITARY  
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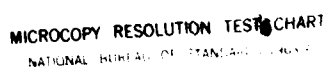
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# AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

## STUDENT REPORT

THE CONCEPT OF COMMAND LEADERSHIP  
IN THE MILITARY CLASSICS:  
ARDANT DU PICQ AND FOCH

MAJOR STEPHEN J. CHMIOLA 86-0530

*"insights into tomorrow"*

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**TITLE** THE CONCEPT OF COMMAND LEADERSHIP IN THE MILITARY  
CLASSICS: ARDANT DU PICH and FOCH

**AUTHOR(S)** MAJOR STEPHEN J. CHMIOLA, USAF

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for graduation.

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE  
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## PREFACE

Dr. Donald Chipman, Squadron Officer School Academic Advisor, has noted that in the recent past the study of military leadership has

"...degenerated into the memorization of various management theories and heavy doses of communication feedback principles interwoven with counseling techniques. These lessons are then linked to some form of socio-psychological model designed to provide the officer with a list of leadership do's and don'ts. 'Know your job,' 'Be enthusiastic' and other such descriptions characterize most of the military leadership lessons. Seldom, if ever, are the concepts of 'war,' 'danger,' and 'uncertainty' included in these presentations. For instance, in Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership, a compendium of well over 800 pages, not once is the term 'war' used. Somewhere in the rush to promote zero defects, to increase managerial effectiveness, the military has substituted contemporary quasi-psychology and business leadership models for the classical combat models" (12:1).

In response to this trend, Dr. Chipman has set out to analyze and publish a book on the concept of command leadership in the military for use as part of the Air University curriculum. The primary source for his efforts will be writings of classic military thinkers, those who throughout history have made significant contributions to the profession of arms. This group is extremely large and ranges from such greats as Jomini to Winston Churchill. In order to effectively prepare an in-depth analysis on each thinker, Dr. Chipman has sub-contracted out various chapters of his book to students of the Air Command and Staff College Class of 1986.

This staff problem study will be devoted to completing a chapter for Dr. Chipman on the leadership concepts of two great French military thinkers, Colonel Charles J.J.J. Ardant du Picq and Marshal Ferdinand Foch. This analysis will be divided into five chapters. The first one will be devoted to providing a biographical sketch of Ardant du Picq, highlighting his significance to the profession of arms and those key experiences throughout his life which influenced his thinking on military leadership. The second chapter will provide an analysis of his published works in order to establish his concept of effective military leadership. The third and fourth chapters will be directed to a similar analysis of the life and works of Ferdinand Foch. In the final chapter, the leadership concepts of both thinkers will be compared and a composite theory will be presented. It is this composite school of leadership thought which dominated French military thinking at the turn of the twentieth century.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Major Stephen J. Chmiola was commissioned in May 1973 through the Air Force ROTC program. Throughout his career he has served as a personnel staff officer in a variety of assignments at base, Major Command and Air Staff level. Most recently he was assigned as the Chief, Consolidated Base Personnel Office, Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea, where in 1983 he was named Pacific Air Forces' Senior Personnel Manager of the Year (base level). Major Chmiola holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics from Cornell University and is currently enrolled in a Masters of Public Administration program with Auburn University at Montgomery. Prior to attendance at Air Command and Staff College, he completed Squadron Officers School.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Part of our College mission is distribution of the students' problem solving products to DoD sponsors and other interested agencies to enhance insight into contemporary, defense related issues. While the College has accepted this product as meeting academic requirements for graduation, the views and opinions expressed or implied are solely those of the author and should not be construed as carrying official sanction.

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REPORT NUMBER 86-0530

AUTHOR(S) Major Stephen J. Chmiola, USAF

TITLE The Concept of Command Leadership in the Military  
Classics: Ardant du Picq and Foch

I. Purpose: To analyze the leadership concepts of two noted, French military thinkers, Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq and Marshal Ferdinand Foch.

II. Background: Today in the study of leadership, the military seems to concentrate far more heavily on socio-psychological factors and modern managerial techniques than on the traits and skills needed to effectively lead troops in combat. In order to better understand the fundamentals of military leadership, it is helpful to review the leadership concepts of great military thinkers throughout history.

III. Problem: Colonel Ardant du Picq and Marshal Foch were significant French military scholars whose concepts significantly influenced several generations of French military leaders in the years leading up to the First World War. While their writings contain many references to the tasks and responsibilities of the military leader, they never specifically addressed their leadership beliefs. In order to reconstruct their concepts of military leadership it is necessary to analyze their surviving works and discern their beliefs on the proper roles of the military leader and on those personality traits which can be associated with effective leadership.

IV. Data: Ardant du Picq was an obscure army officer who wrote on French military reforms in the 1860's and died before most of his essays were made

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## CONTINUED

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public. His surviving works, published posthumously under the title "Battle Studies," not only discussed many of the military issues of his day but also highlighted the significance of fear on the individual soldier in combat and stressed the importance of moral force. Ardant du Picq saw four key roles of the military leader: maintaining discipline and morale; inspiring confidence in his men; directing his men's movements in battle; and conducting realistic training. He also stressed five traits as contributors to effective leadership: personal courage; decisiveness; concern for the welfare of one's men; sound judgment; and foresight to plan ahead. Foch, best remembered for his role as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies on the Western Front in 1918, actually influenced the French military far more during his pre-war years as an instructor and commandant at the French Staff College. It was during his teaching days that he deeply influenced generations of French officers with his preaching on the importance of moral force and an offensive spirit. Through review of his four books, "The Principles of War," "On the Conduct of War," "Precepts of Judgments," and "The Memoirs of Marshal Foch," one can see that his concept of military leadership changed very little over his lifetime. He saw six primary roles for the military leader: preparing oneself to command; leading troops in battle; instilling discipline; building morale; encouraging initiative; and training one's troops effectively. He also saw six fundamental traits for effective leadership: moral courage; intelligence; judgment; initiative; inspiration; and devotion to duty.

V. Conclusions: The leadership concepts expressed by Ardant du Picq and Foch were very similar in nature. Both were founded on the importance of moral force and both included essentially the same fundamental roles and traits of the effective leader. A composite of their leadership beliefs would include five key roles: preparing oneself and one's men for the rigors of combat; inspiring one's men and strengthening their morale; instilling discipline; leading one's men in battle; and encouraging initiative in one's subordinate officers. It would also include five essential traits: moral courage; sound judgment; intelligence; devotion to duty; and initiative.

## Chapter I

### Ardant du Picq - A Biographical Sketch

Charles Jean Jacques Joseph Ardant du Picq was one of France's most significant military theorists during the later half of the nineteenth century and his work one of the key influences of French military thought during the first two decades of the twentieth century. He was one of the earliest military writers to take a rational, scientific approach to the study of warfare; one of the first great proponents of moral force in combat (i.e., morale, esprit de corps, courage and unit cohesion); and a key contributor to the development and evolution of small unit-level tactics and doctrine. Today, many of his fundamental concepts help provide the basis for the U.S. Army's Airland Battle doctrine (11:56, 64).

Very little information is available concerning the life of Charles J.J.J. Ardant du Picq. Although he is recognized as a significant contributor to military thought, his complete biography has not yet been written. From what sources are available, we do know he was born October 19, 1821 in South-western France in the vicinity of Perigueux. An active child with a taste for sports and physical activities, he was a good student, particularly in those subjects which he enjoyed (e.g., French Composition). He entered the French Military Academy at St-Cyr at the age of twenty-one and earned a reputation for good humor, frankness and concern for fellow students.

Commissioned a Sub-Lieutenant in October 1844, Ardant du Picq was assigned to the 67th Infantry Regiment, where he served until the outbreak of the Crimean War. Then, in December 1853 as a young captain wishing to see field action, he voluntarily transferred to the 9th Battalion of Foot Chasseurs. It was his Crimean war experiences with this unit which proved critical in shaping his later attitude on the overall shortcomings of French military leadership, organization and administration. Most significant to him were the harsh months he spent in the winter siege of Sebastopol and his participation in the bloody attack on the city's central bastion. This action not only earned him his commanders' praise but also left him a Russian prisoner-of-war for several months (1:26-27). It was during this period that Ardant du Picq began to witness the gross planning and administrative deficiencies of his military, shortcomings which cost the lives of tens of thousands of Frenchmen through disease and exposure (1:213).

Upon his release from Russian captivity in early 1856, he was promoted to Major and given command of the 16th Battalion of Chasseurs, with which he served in the Syrian Campaign of 1860-61. A Lieutenant Colonel of the 55th Regiment of the Line he also served more than two years in Algeria (1864-66). It was during these campaigns that Ardant du Picq would see numerically

inferior but highly trained French troops repeatedly defeat their opponents. As a result he began to seriously question the Napoleonic tactics of mass preached by the French High Command and to shape his own views of proper tactics, order and maneuver.

The events of 1866 proved to be highly significant for Ardant du Picq. Not long after his return from North Africa, the French military establishment was stunned by the overwhelming Prussian victory over the Austrians at Sadowa. This victory over what was thought to be one of the finest armies in Europe was so rapid, so overshadowing of the French success at Solferino in 1859, that it touched off a period of lively French debate over military reorganization and prompted a series of hasty military reforms.

It was into this literary debate that Ardant du Picq threw himself. He recognized the stagnation of French military thought since the days of Napoleon, the arrogance brought from past victories, the establishment's refusal to consider new tactics and the shifting patterns of modern warfare. From 1866 until the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, he dedicated himself to his studies and to working for much needed military reform.

To a large degree, Ardant du Picq based his essays on his twenty-plus years of military service and in particular the combat experience he had seen in the Crimea, Syria and Algeria. He further expanded his experience base by developing and distributing to his fellow officers a questionnaire on their experiences in combat; a revolutionary concept at the time. To supplement this data and to help him better understand the nature of man in battle, he turned to the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans (eg. Polybius, Caesar). He felt these military authors were more honest and straight-forward than their modern counterparts in discussing the fundamentals of combat and the actions of men in battle (11:57-58).

Ardant du Picq was forced to set aside his scholarly efforts in July 1870 when Napoleon III declared war on Germany. At this point in his career, he was a Colonel and Commander of the 15th Infantry Regiment of the Line. In a matter of days he had marshaled his troops to a strength of 2300 and set out for the German frontier. On the morning of August 15, while leading his troops in a march to Gravelotte, his force was surprised by a German artillery attack. Before ever engaging the enemy, Colonel Ardant du Picq was mortally wounded. He died three days later in a Metz hospital, too soon to witness his predictions of overwhelming French defeat come true at Sedan (1:32-36).

Although his life was cut short during the opening days of the Franco-Prussian War, his significant impact on French military thought was just beginning. During his lifetime very few of his essays were published and even those were limited to a very small audience. Within ten years after his death however, portions of his work began to receive the publication and recognition they deserved. In 1902, a collection of his complete works was published in book form under the title, "Battle Studies." This text would become a French military classic, a tribute to a great thinker and one of the most widely read books within the French military during the First World War (11:57).

## Chapter II

### Ardant du Picq's Concept of Leadership

The purpose of this chapter is to document Ardant du Picq's concept of leadership by discussing his views on the role of the military leader and those traits he most frequently associated with effective leadership. To do so requires a careful analysis of his essays collected in his posthumous work, "Battle Studies." Over the next several pages, the reader will find a brief review of the many topics he addressed in his writing, with emphasis placed on his most fundamental concept, the importance of the individual soldier and moral force in combat. The foundation for Ardant du Picq's leadership concept thus having been laid, the remainder of the chapter will be devoted to examining Ardant du Picq's thoughts on leadership traits and roles.

Through his essays Colonel Ardant du Picq was able to comment on many of the key French military issues of the 1860's. In keeping with the post-Sadowa trend of military self-criticism, he added his condemnation of the French High Command, railing at its arrogance, inefficient bureaucracy, archaic theories and inability to grasp the concepts of modern warfare. He joined the debate over French conscription arguing staunchly for a smaller, professional French army, rather than the larger but lesser trained conscripted force sought by the French Minister of War. He also called for improved training methods for both officers and soldiers, to better prepare them for the rigors of combat; for tactics which would be effective in light of the technological advancements in weapons; and, for the development of a true planning process to replace French reliance on battlefield improvisation.

Perhaps his most significant and lasting contribution to military thought, however, was his revolutionary focus on the individual soldier in combat. Other military thinkers of his time were prone to consider all things military in the context of war as a giant chess game, pitting one general's strategy against another. Ardant du Picq, however, viewed the capabilities of the individual soldier as the nucleus around which all strategy, all concepts of battle and leadership must be structured (11:50).

He believed that fear was the human emotion most prevalent and overpowering in all combat situations and that the road to victory lay in finding effective ways of controlling fear. He found discipline to be the key to making men fight in spite of themselves. In ancient warfare, discipline was maintained solely by the leaders; combatants were always under the close surveillance of their leaders, who would act swiftly and decisively in punishing those who could not control their fear. ". . . Man has a horror, of death. . . Discipline is for the purpose of dominating that horror by a still greater horror, that of punishment or disgrace" (1:94).

In modern warfare, however, Ardant du Picq saw that close surveillance by leaders would not be feasible due to the wide dispersion of combatants on the battlefield. In addition, Draconian disciplinary methods could no longer be applied due to societal changes. For these reasons he sought other means of maintaining military discipline and he found them in the development of unit cohesion and esprit de corps (2:212-214).

Once in action. . . the infantryman of today escapes control of his officers. This is due to the disorder inherent in battle. . . Control, then, can only be in the hands of his comrades (1:194).

What makes the soldier capable of obedience and direction in action is a sense of discipline. This includes: respect and confidence in his chiefs; confidence in his comrades and fear of their reproaches and retaliations if he abandons them in danger; his desire is to go where others do without trembling more than they; in a word, the whole of esprit de corps (1:122).

To Ardant du Picq, moral force was the essential key to military victory. He believed that the troops who could better control their fear, fight resolutely, and continue to maneuver and advance would put fear into the hearts of the enemy and eventually overpower them, even in the face of superior numbers and firepower.

In light of these fundamental concepts, Colonel Ardant du Picq saw the primary role of the leader as one of maintaining morale and discipline. Establishing and then maintaining discipline is not a task to be taken lightly. As Ardant du Picq stated:

Discipline cannot be secured or created in a day (1:111).

It is not enough to order discipline. The officer must have the will to enforce it and its vigorous enforcement must instill subordination in the soldiers. It must make them fear it more than they fear the enemy's blows (1:222).

In line with enforcing discipline, the leader must strive to build unit integrity, morale, esprit de corps; he must teach his men to think, act, and rely upon each other as a team.

Unity and confidence cannot be improvised. They alone can create that mutual trust, that feeling of force which gives courage and daring. Courage, that is the temporary domination of will over instinct, brings about victory. Unity alone produces fighters (1:97).

The leader must then learn to effectively gauge the morale of his troops. He must understand his men and their capabilities in order to effectively lead them in combat. He must be able to recognize their limits and must "never order the impossible for the impossibility becomes disobedience" and thus attacks the foundation of discipline itself (1:257).

Another essential role of the leader is to inspire confidence in his men. To fight effectively as a team, members of a unit must have faith in each other, their leader and their plan of action. This is a critical responsibility of the leader. He cannot let his troops lose faith or all could be lost. In battle, the officer must be out in front leading the way. He must lead by example, by remaining cool and never allowing his own fear to become terror.

In the advance the officers, the soldiers are content if they are merely directed; but when the battle becomes hot, they must see their commander, know him to be near. It does not matter if he is without initiative, incapable of giving an order. His presence creates a belief that direction exists and that is enough (1:141).

A third key role of the leader is to direct his men's movements in battle. In addition to understanding his men and their capabilities, a leader must also know how to effectively use them in battle and must be able to foresee the actions of the enemy. To accomplish the latter two, he must dedicate himself to studying past battles so that he might effectively predict future behavior. "Victory belongs to the commander who knows how to keep them (his troops) in good order, to hold them and direct them" (1:101).

A fourth role of the leader is to realistically train his men for combat. Training ground maneuvers can help prepare soldiers for battle but only if they are told the real purpose of the training and under what conditions it might serve them in future. Similarly, the leader must utilize realistic tactics when training so that what the soldier learns on the practice field will appear logical and familiar to him on the battlefield.

Throughout the writings of Col. Ardant du Picq there are a number of recurring traits which he seems to tie closely with effective leadership. The foremost among these is personal courage. In light of the leader's responsibility to maintain discipline and instill confidence, he must set the example for his men in the face of the enemy; by doing so he insures his men will not give in to their fear and panic. As the Colonel stated,

. . . (Leaders) are strong enough to overcome their emotion, the fear of advancing, without even losing their heads or their coolness. Fear with them never becomes terror; it is forgotten in the activities of command. He who does not feel strong enough to keep his heart from being gripped by terror, should never think of becoming an officer (1:120).

A good leader will also display self-confidence, decisiveness and firmness. He will be able to confront the unexpected and respond quickly and decisively, trusting in his training, his own abilities and those of his men. In Ardant du Picq's description of the state of the French Army of the 1860's, he wrote:

French officers lack firmness. . . In the face of danger they lack composure, they are disconcerted, breathless, hesitant, forgetful, unable to think of a way out (1:225).



The mass needs. . . leaders who have the firmness and decision of command proceeding from habit and an entire faith in their unquestionable right to command (1:95).

Concern for the welfare of one's men is another leadership trait highlighted by Ardant du Picq. He discussed the importance of knowing one's men and their capabilities. This can never be accomplished by the leader who refuses to concern himself with his troops, who will not get out to see how his men are faring, where they are sleeping, how they are eating, etc.

An effective leader must also display sound judgment and an ability to reason logically even under the most stressful conditions. He must be able to accurately gauge the physical and mental stamina of his men. "A leader must combine resolute bravery and impetuosity with prudence and calmness; a difficult matter" (1:182).

A good leader must also demonstrate foresight, an ability to plan ahead; to rely solely on improvisation is foolish and sometimes deadly. Colonel Ardant du Picq related a story of a French Major newly assigned to Mexico. Without considering the need for full canteens, he marched his battalion into the desert. By the time they returned, half of his command had died of thirst.

One is astonished at the lack of foresight found in three out of four officers. Why? Are three-quarters of the officers so stupid? No. It is because their egoism, generally frankly acknowledged, allows them to think only of who is looking at them. . . their troops are never their preoccupation; consequently they do not think of them at all (1:211).

In summary, Colonel Ardant du Picq saw four principle roles of the leader: maintaining discipline and morale; inspiring confidence in his men; directing his men's movement in battle; and conducting realistic training. In regard to leadership characteristics, he stressed five traits as contributors to effective leadership: personal courage; decisiveness; concern for the welfare of one's men; sound judgment; and foresight to plan ahead.

### Chapter III

#### Foch - A Biographical Sketch

Marshal Ferdinand Foch was a most significant contributor to the profession of arms. Over the next few pages the reader will find a brief review of his contributions and a short biographical background, highlighting not only his achievements but also those key influences and experiences which helped shape his character and his thoughts on the role of the military leader.

Foch, one of France's greatest generals of the twentieth century, is best remembered for his role as the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies on the Western Front during World War I and as the one officer most responsible for the Allied victory over the Germans in 1918. His significance to the profession of arms, however, goes far beyond his battlefield exploits. As an instructor and commandant of the French Staff College during the late 1890's and early 1900's, he was one of the most influential forces in shaping the intellectual attitude of several generations of French Army officers (2:218). He was a believer, a prophet of an offensive doctrine of war and of the ultimate importance of moral force in combat. At a time when the French military establishment was still struggling to right itself after its crushing defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and its leaders were unsure of future strategy and tactics, "Foch's teachings came as a breath of fresh air dispelling the fog of depression and doubt. It restored their pride and self-confidence, appealed to their instinctive elan and spirit of initiative" (9:18). It was his spirit of the offensive which helped shape France's war plans and strategic thought during the first two decades of the twentieth century and led to what is known today as the World War I strategy of attrition.

Ferdinand Foch was born October 2, 1851 in the small town of Tarbes in the south of France, to the middle-class family of Bertrand Jules Napoleon Foch. In his early years he experienced two significant influences which profoundly shaped his character (7:5). The first of these was a strong religious faith passed on to him by his parents, both devout Catholics. This in turn was deepened by the significant upsurge in religious emotion throughout the Pyrenees and the whole Catholic world as a result of Bernadette's miraculous vision in 1858 of the Virgin Mary at the Grotto of Lourdes (less than fifteen miles from his home) (9:1). His deep religious faith would prove to be his reservoir of strength during the darkest hours of his life. The other key influence during his formative years was the steady diet of military tales he received concerning the exploits of his ancestors who had served in the armies of Napoleon. It is with little wonder that as he grew he developed an early taste for the study of military history or that he took as his life-long idol, Napoleon Bonaparte. Thus we see that his devotion to the Napoleonic tradition,

a devotion which would so influence his later concepts of war and leadership, had its roots during the first years of his life.

Foch began his formal education in Tarbes at the age of ten but attended a series of public and parochial schools over the next several years as he followed his father's civil service postings throughout France. He received his baccalaureate from the Jesuit College de St. Michel at St. Etienne and in the Fall of 1869 entered the Jesuit College de Clement at Metz in order that he might prepare for his entrance exams to the Ecole Polytechnique, one of the most prestigious technical training colleges in the country. Not only was this college reputed to be the gateway to a majority of the top posts within the French civil service (much to the delight of the elder Foch) but also the French cadet college for artillery and engineering officers.

Foch's next few years proved to be most significant ones to his later career. After having completed a very successful first term at Metz and while on vacation in the summer of 1870, the Franco-Prussian War began. A patriotic eighteen year-old, he immediately enlisted as an infantry private in the 4th Regiment of the Line and was assigned for training, first at the depot at Saint Etienne and later at Charlon-sur Saome. Although the war would end before his training, his first military experience left him with bitter memories of inept leadership and an opinion that above all "what is required of leaders is that they should command" (6:13). After the crushing French defeat and the disbanding of his unit in March 1871, Foch returned to his studies at Metz to find it under German military occupation. For several months the patriotic young Foch chafed under the heavy hand of his new masters and for many years would remember their indignities. The most lasting scar, however, was inflicted when his countrymen were forced to cede the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to the enemy. It was at this point in his life that he dedicated himself to the pursuit of a military rather than a civil service career and to the return of the provinces stolen from France (7:10).

Foch entered Ecole Polytechnique in November 1871 and studied there for fifteen months before transferring to the Artillery School at Fontainebleau. In October 1873, at the age of twenty-two he graduated fourth in his class, was commissioned an Artillery Sub-Lieutenant and was posted to the 24th Artillery Regiment at Tarbes. Earning rapid promotion (a Captain by 1878) and a reputation as a first-class artillery officer, Foch was selected to attend the French Staff College in 1885. His two years there proved to be highly significant ones for him. It was at the Staff College he was deeply influenced by one of his professors, Major Charles Millet, a man who would become a close friend and would help Foch save his career during the anti-clerical storm of the 1890's (6:19). It was Millet's teachings, based on his battlefield experiences during the Franco-Prussian War, which helped Foch to crystalize his ideas on the shortcomings of French military leadership and on the fallacies of a defensive strategy. It was also during this period as a student that he would have the opportunity to access the shortcomings of the school's curriculum and contemplate the reforms which in later years he would be in the position to carry out (9:9).

After graduating near the top of his class in 1887, he was assigned to staff duties with the 16th Army Corps at Montpellier and later with the 31st Division. Shortly thereafter, being remembered for his top record at the Staff College, he received an assignment to the Operations Branch of the French War Ministry. It was there he was given his first opportunity to study in detail his country's plans for the mobilization, concentration and supply of her armies in the time of war. Foch attacked his new job with a zeal, determined to shake up what he considered to be the Army's outdated methods and ways of thinking and to replace France's defensive doctrine of war with one of offense (9:10). He often bucked heads with his defense-minded superiors and earned the reputation as a revolutionary, but in doing so made his first inroads into changing the wartime doctrine which would shape France's actions in the years to come (6:20).

In October 1895, Major Foch entered what would prove to be one of the most influential positions he would hold in his lifetime: professor at the French Staff College and shaper of the young military minds of France's future leaders. Assigned initially as the Assistant Instructor for Military History, Strategy and Applied Tactics, he immersed himself in his work. In order to prepare himself for the task, he began a six year long, in-depth study of his subject area with particular emphasis on the Napoleonic Wars and the writings of Clausewitz. It was at this point in his career that he was able to develop his own doctrine of war. Through his tireless efforts, he soon became a polished lecturer admired by his students for his lively and thought-provoking presentations and noted by them as one of the school's most original thinkers (9:18). Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and elevated to Chief Instructor after only one year, Foch was finally in the position to teach his own theories, to proclaim his doctrine of the offensive and the all-importance of moral force. By the time he left his instructor's chair in 1900, the fiery and articulate Foch had left his stamp on more than 400 young officers, those who by the outbreak of World War I would be in influential command and staff positions throughout the French Army (9:17). In a matter of only a few years Colonel Foch and his following of inspired "young Turks" brought about the moral and intellectual regeneration of a French Army wallowing in uncertainty and self-doubt still remaining from their humiliating loss to the Prussians thirty years before (10:82).

In 1900, in the wave of anti-clericalism which swept the French government in the aftermath of the Dreyfus Affair, Lieutenant Colonel Foch, a devout Catholic, was abruptly removed from his teaching position. His promotion to Colonel was withheld and he was sent to Laon to assume duties as the second in command of the 29th Artillery Regiment, an intentionally obscure position intended to take him far away from the seats of power and influence. During the next few years, some of the darkest in Foch's life when his bright career appeared to be in ruins, his deep religious faith sustained him. While his Catholic contemporaries were railing at the injustice of their persecution and were talking of resigning, Foch scolded them, "You have no pluck. When war comes you will have to put up with things worse than that! If you can't stand it now, what will you do then" (7:35)? He used this quiet phase of his life to collect and edit some of his lectures at the Staff College. He would publish these a few years later in two books "The Principles of War" (1903) and "On the

Conduct of War" (1904) in an effort to spread his spirit of the offensive still further throughout the French officer corps (7:36).

Foch had not given up and his faith was rewarded. He received his overdue promotion to Colonel in March 1903 and command of the 35th Artillery Regiment at Vannes. His return to influence continued as his old Staff College instructor and friend, General Millet, took command of the 5th Army Corps at Orleans and appointed him as his Chief of Staff. This proved to be another key assignment in Foch's career, for it was there he was able to gain invaluable staff experience at an intermediate headquarters, experience which helped him tie together lessons learned previously in his years of troop duty with the more theoretical studies of his Staff College and War Ministry days. It was also in this assignment he was able to gain a large measure of protection from further anti-clerical discrimination due to his close association with General Millet, a staunch Protestant (6:30).

Promoted to rank of Brigadier General in June 1907, he was again assigned to the General Staff of the War Ministry. His stay there, however, was a short one, for in the Fall of 1908 with the help and influence of his old friend Millet, Foch was appointed as Commandant of the French Staff College. During his three year tenure (1908-1911), he was given a second opportunity to instill an offensive spirit within the French officer corps and he worked hard to improve the school's curriculum and expand its instruction in the fundamentals of leadership. It was also during this period that he developed a close friendship with his English Staff College counterpart, Brigadier General Henry Wilson. It was their relationship which would pave the way for the close French and English cooperation needed in the upcoming years in order to win the struggle against the Germans (9:30-32).

General Foch received his second star in 1911 and then, over the next few years, a series of key command positions of increasing importance: first at the 13th Infantry Division at Chaumont, then the 8th Army Corps at Bourges and finally to the most combat-ready and prized command in the French Army, the 20th Army Corps, headquartered at Nancy and overlooking the German frontier. It was in this last command position, as part of France's advance guard, which General Foch found himself at the outbreak of the Great War. In the opening days, his 20th Corps took part in the French Second Army's ill-fated offensive strike at Lorraine and earned distinction for covering the rapid retreat of the French forces and delivering the counterstrike which halted the German advance on Nancy. This opening action of the war left a lasting impression on him. Seeing a courageous French Army halt the offensive of a German force markedly stronger in both numbers and material force significantly strengthened his beliefs that moral force is always superior to material force and that no army can be defeated if it will not admit defeat (5:52).

Marked for greater duties, General Foch left his 20th Corps in August 1914, to organize a new 9th Army and to help close a dangerous gap being driven between the French 4th and 5th Armies. By breathing new life into his dispirited command, making them stand fast in the face of the strongest and most sustained pressure on the Allied Front and encouraging them onto the offensive despite overwhelming odds, he helped the Allies to victory and earned

himself a reputation as one of the heroes of the First Battle of the Marne. Again recognized for his outstanding leadership, he was appointed Assistant to the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army in October, 1914. He was given command of the French Northern Army Group composed of the 2nd, 3rd and 6th Armies and tasked with coordinating French operations with those of the British Expeditionary Force and the Belgian Army. Through his aggressive spirit, unflagging confidence and the force of his personality, he was able to achieve the high degree of Allied cooperation needed to blunt the German offensive at Yser and Ypres, halt their race to the sea and save the channel ports (6:92-94).

In the aftermath of the German offensive of 1914, the character of the war changed abruptly to one of the trench warfare, a style in which Foch's moral force and offensive spirit could not overcome the numerical and material superiority of the Germans. The attack-counter-attack methods of the 1915-1916 period which gained little ground yet cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Allied soldiers became known as the strategy of attrition. Finally after the five month Somme Offensive in which more than 200,000 French and 400,000 British soldiers died in order to gain only a six mile advance of the Allied lines, the French government lost faith in its top military leaders. General Foch was among those officers removed from command (2:221). In December, 1916, under the pretext of failing health (believable for the sixty-five year old French hero but totally untrue), General Foch was relieved and appointed chairman of a new advisory board at Senlis, created to study problems of Inter-Allied strategy (7:232-234).

Again in the face of a major setback, his faith sustained him. This time his period of disfavor was quite short. Only five months after his relief, military conditions forced another change in France's top leadership and on May 15, 1917, General Foch was appointed Chief of the French General Staff. In this capacity he worked long and hard to enhance Inter-Allied cooperation and to create a centralized command structure. Most significant during this period was the moral and material support he provided to the Italian High Command in the wake of their devastating losses at Caporetto. His efforts in restoring Italian optimism, determination and decision were critical in halting the Austrian-German offensive into Italy in the Fall of 1917 (6:139).

While the Allies were still struggling among themselves to create an Inter-Allied command structure, the German Army renewed their offensive on the Western Front. On May 21, 1918, with a surprise blow just south of the Somme, they shattered the Allied lines at the juncture between the French and British Armies. With the Germans pouring forth and neither the French forces under General Petain nor the British forces under General Haig willing or able to extend themselves into the breach to link up with their allies, petty Allied jealousies and bickerings were set aside. On 26 March, the aggressive and ever optimistic General Foch was appointed by both the French and British governments to coordinate the actions of the two commanders-in-chief. The Americans and Italians joined the agreement a little later. In only a few weeks Foch's power to command was expanded and he was given the title Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces on the Western Front. Foch spent the first few weeks of his new command speeding from one Army headquarters to another

exhorting the commanders to hold their ground and instilling in them his unconquerable spirit. It worked; through the renewed fighting spirit of the Allied defenders and Foch's judicious use of his reserves, he was able to close the breach (6:158-161).

Over the next few months, in the face of significant differences over strategy among the Allied leaders, Foch was able to show his brilliance as an Allied commander. Always capable and willing to see the other side's point of view, he was able to effectively meld the actions of the French, British, American and Belgian forces, to halt the German offensive and to finally take the offensive himself. Beginning with the Second Battle of the Marne in July, 1918, Foch began a series of offensive actions which drove the Germans back along the entire front and earned him a promotion to Marshal of France (August 7, 1918). At this point, now in command of more than three million men and finally in control along the entire front, Marshal Foch refused to let up the pressure on the enemy; he continually drove them back. Faced with their repeated setbacks on the Western Front, the capitulation of their allies and with internal strife growing at home, the Germans petitioned the Allies for an armistice in October 1918.

It was Marshal Foch, the writer of the military terms of the armistice, whom the Allies empowered to meet with the German representatives concerning a cessation of hostilities. The terms Germany would have to accept were extremely harsh, yet in negotiations, the indomitable Marshal of France would alter them very little. In the early hours of November 11, 1918, in a railway coach in the forest of Compiegne, Marshal Ferdinand Foch accepted the German surrender. This was the pinnacle of the Marshal's long and distinguished career, for although he would command the Allied Army of Occupation and chair the Allied Military Committee of Versailles, his influence on the peace process would diminish rapidly.

Following the war, Marshal Foch received many tributes and honors from the Allied nations whose armies he led to victory, however no ceremony, no honor meant more to him than his triumphant return to Metz in November, 1918. It was there, forty-seven years earlier, the young Ferdinand, chaffing under the occupation of the Germans, pledged his life to returning Alsace and Lorraine to France. On November 26, 1918, as the leader of the greatest military force ever assembled, he achieved his life's ambition (7:408).

In the years following the treaty of Versailles until his death, Marshal Foch became a symbol of the Allied victory and an elder statesman of France, much in demand for ceremonial occasions but with little governmental influence. Succumbing to a heart attack at the age of seventy-nine, Marshal Foch, hero of France, died March 20, 1929, and was laid to rest in Notre Dame, in a vault beside his idol, Napoleon Bonaparte.

## Chapter IV

### Foch's Concept of Leadership

In order to discern Ferdinand Foch's concept of leadership and how it evolved over his career, it is necessary to study the various texts he wrote. He authored four major works over his lifetime: "The Principles of War" published in 1903; "On the Conduct of War," 1904; "Precepts and Judgments," 1919; "The Memoirs of Marshal Foch," 1931. There follows over the next several pages one reader's analysis of three of these texts. The fourth, "On the Conduct of War," has been treated only briefly as the book was written in French and an English translation has not been published. The analysis of the other three works includes the author's purpose in writing; a general review of its content; Foch's expressed opinion on the role of the military leader and the traits of effective leadership; and a comparison with his leadership thoughts expressed in his earlier book(s). The chapter concludes with a brief summary of Foch's concept of leadership.

Marshal Foch's first book, "The Principles of War," was a collection of his lectures on tactics and strategy which he delivered as Chief Instructor of the French Staff College between 1895 and 1900. He put this work together immediately following his dismissal from the Staff College faculty during his quiet days of garrison duty with the 29th Artillery Regiment at Laon. The main purpose for his writing appears to have been an effort to continue preaching his doctrine of the offensive and to spread the word on the importance of moral force to those in the French Army whom he did not have an opportunity to lecture during his teaching days. He not only succeeded in reaching much of his target population but also, through an international publication, provided "many students outside France, their first guide to the labyrinths of war study" (8:153). Thus, although exiled from the centers of French military power, his influence could continue to expand.

The Marshal began his book with a critique of the two main, contemporary views on the study of warfare. He criticized the first of these, the belief that no real study was necessary since all true leaders are born with the gifts and the luck needed for victory, as nothing but a type of fetishism and fatalism which had previously led to a deterioration in French leadership and in France's crushing loss in the Franco-Prussian War. He also found fault with the second view, that war is nothing more than a science which can be reduced to a series of mathematical formulas concerning armament, administration and organization; this he argued only led to concentrating on the material factors of war and ignoring the more critical moral factors. Foch turned instead to the view that war must be considered an art, one with a set of basic principles which must be studied in order to give leaders a common frame of reference from which to take innovative actions. He acknowledged that actual experience in



war was not the best way to train new leaders, rather an officer must have already studied the principles of war so that by analyzing actual case studies in military history he might learn to effectively apply those principles before his first taste of combat.

A majority of his text was dedicated to explaining the basic principles of war (i.e., economy of force; freedom of action; free disposal of forces; security; etc.) and then detailing how to apply them through use of such means as an advance guard, strategic surprise, security, and decisive attack. Foch cleverly used home-spun metaphors to explain his complex theoretical concepts. For example, in explaining the functioning of an advance guard he wrote,

When one moves at night, without a light, in one's house, what does one do? Does one not (though it is ground one knows well) extend one's arm in front of one so as to avoid knocking one's head against the wall? The extended arm is nothing more but an advanced guard. The arm keeps its suppleness while it advances and only stiffens more or less when it meets an obstacle, in order to perform its duty without risk, to open a door for instance; in the same way the advance guard can advance and go into action without risking destruction, provided that it uses suppleness and strength, maneuvering power, resisting power (5:146).

He also used a large number of quotations from noted military leaders and authors to lend credence to his arguments. Among those most often quoted were Clausewitz, von Moltke and Napoleon. But perhaps most significant to his style was his use of actual cases out of military history to explain how effective leaders gained victory through successful application of the principles of war while less effective leaders did not. The primary sources for these case studies were the Napoleonic Wars of the late 1700's and early 1800's; the Austrian-Prussian War of 1866; and the opening battles of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

The main thrust of Foch's effort appears to be directed to extolling the virtues of an offensive doctrine of war and the supremacy of moral force in combat. He stated that throughout history a defensive doctrine of war, one more concerned with material things (e.g., fortifications, ground, armaments) and with not losing, led ultimately to an army's defeat. This was not only true in the French defeats of 1870 but also in the days of Napoleon when many of his victories would logically have been losses had he faced morally stronger, offensive-oriented opponents. Foch wrote:

The offensive form alone, be it resorted to at once or only after the defensive, can lead to results and must therefore always be adopted, at least in the end. Any defensive battle must then end in an offensive action, in a thrust, in a successful counter-attack, otherwise there is no result (5:283).

To conquer is to advance (4:287).

He stated that the defensive doctrine puts too much faith in material force and saps moral strength and individual confidence and that is unforgivable. He believed moral strength and moral force (i.e., courage, daring, will, faith) to be of the utmost importance. Even in his recognition of the importance of an army's superiority in numbers and materiel, he credited that importance to the degree in which they could stimulate the morale of the army and put fear into the hearts of the enemy. In "The Principles of War" Foch discussed at length the superiority of the moral over the material.

A battle won is a battle in which one will not confess oneself beaten (5:287).

Victory means will. . . War is the domain of moral force. Victory is moral superiority in the victors; moral depression in the vanquished. Battle is a struggle between two wills (5:287).

In order that our army be victorious it must have a morale superior to that which the enemy possesses or receives from his commander. To organize battle consists of enhancing our own spirit to the highest degree in order to break that of the enemy. The will to conquer: such is victory's first condition. . . (5:287).

In comprehending Foch's central beliefs concerning the importance of an offensive fighting spirit and the supremacy of moral over material force, one can begin to understand his concepts of military leadership.

Marshal Foch saw many essential roles for the leader but the initial and perhaps the most important one was the preparation of oneself for command. He believed that the leader must prepare his mind and his will through study and hard work in order that he might withstand the rigors of battle and the challenges to be put to him in the position of command. He believed that the young leader must begin by developing an ability to think clearly and to reason in a purely objective fashion. Then, through the study of military history and the analysis of case studies, he must learn the basic principles of the art of war and how to apply them, not rigidly, but in variable ways dependent upon different circumstances and conditions. Only in this way could an officer learn the lessons which would keep him and his men alive in battle: the proper employment of troops, the function of different weapons, the use of firepower, the use of ground, etc. In this knowledge, then, he would gain a confidence, a moral strength, which would allow him to act freely and decisively on the field of battle. As Foch wrote,

. . .will, judgment and freedom of mind in the midst of danger. These are the natural gifts in a man of genius, in a born general; in the average man such advantages may be secured by means of work and reflection (5:290).

Knowledge soon provides convictions, confidence, the faculty of enlightened decision. It creates the power to act and indeed makes men of action. . . When a fighting man has the intimate feeling of being enlightened, when he knows that the instruction he has acquired

enables him to find his way easily amidst very difficult circumstances, he will become more firm (5:10).

The second key role of the leader, according to Marshal Foch, is to create and maintain discipline. As he wrote,

An army is a delicate being kept alive by discipline. 'Discipline is the strength of armies.', they say. It is much more; it is the very first condition of their existence. Discipline alone, owing to hierarchic organization and to the transmission and execution of orders resulting there from permits a commander to direct any action (5:293).

It is the leader's responsibility to maintain a high degree of discipline within his unit, to develop teamwork, unity on the battlefield and an assurance his troops will conform to his will without thinking in the midst of battle. But to Foch, this was not enough; the leader must also instill within his subordinate officers an active rather than a passive obedience, a willingness to find a way to comply with orders received, no matter the difficulties.

To be disciplined does not mean that one does not commit any breach of discipline; that one does not commit some disorderly action; such a definition works for the rank and file, but not at all for a commander placed in any degree of the military hierarchy. . . It means that one frankly adopt the thoughts and views of the superior in command, and that one uses all humanly practicable means to give him satisfaction. . . it means acting in compliance with orders received, and therefore finding in one's own mind, by effort and reflection, the possibility to carry out such orders. It also means finding in one's own will the energy to face the risks involved in execution (5:102).

Another key role of the leader is to instill within and then continually strengthen a unit's moral force. As was discussed earlier, Foch believed that moral force would always be superior to material force and that no unit could lose a battle if it did not believe itself to be defeated. Thus, it is the leader who is responsible for the will, the moral strength of his unit; he is the one who must encourage their fighting spirit, their will to conquer.

To organize battle consists of enhancing our own spirit to the highest degree in order to break that of the enemy. The will to conquer: such is victory's first condition and therefore every soldier's first duty; but it also amounts to the supreme resolve which the commander must if need be impart to the soldier's soul (5:33).

Whatever is done within an army must always aim at increasing and strengthening its moral force (5:33).

To think and to will, to possess intelligence and energy will not suffice him (the leader); he must also possess the gift of communicating his own supreme energy to the masses of men who are, so to speak, his weapon (5:287).

Another role which Foch saw as essential for the leader is the direction of men in battle. A leader must demonstrate courage and set the example for his men; he must therefore lead them from up front and not from behind. He must be on the spot to strengthen them, to maintain their order and discipline, to lead them forward when the time is right and to react to ever-changing battlefield conditions.

When under fire, the man in the rank and file obeys the voice of the officers he knows: company commanders, section commanders. The line soon turns into separate sets of individuals who cannot be carried forward unless they are led individually and are known by name to their commander (5:206).

(In modern battle) troops which have started fighting get mixed up; they must constantly be taken in hand again by officers commanding small units (battalions, companies) so as to be able to undertake new combined efforts (5:332).

Individual valor in the rank and file is insufficient to create victory. . . What is it that provides victory? Tactics, order, maneuver. . . The influence of that commander, of that directing mind soon becomes considerable and decisive (4:205).

A fourth key leadership role, according to the Marshal, is the encouragement of initiative in one's subordinate officers. A leader must be careful not to stifle his subordinate commanders. He cannot take their place and think and decide for them, nor see through their eyes nor be everywhere on the battlefield at once. He must be careful in the orders he issues, for they cannot be so specific as to discount chance, nor can they be of great length discussing what to do under all varying circumstances. To treat subordinate officers in this manner will only make them lose confidence in themselves and in the overall plan of operations. Instead, a commander must define for his subordinate commanders, in general terms, the goal at which their efforts must be directed. In this way, each may use his initiative while still achieving a unity of purpose with the remainder of the army.

To command. . . can only consist, for the commander-in-chief, in determining the result to be aimed at, the general function ascribed to each subordinate unit in the operation undertaken by the whole of the force; at the same time such a determination must leave the subordinate chief entirely free to choose the means which have to be used in order to reach, in any particular case, the result demanded, in spite of adverse circumstances (5:172).

One further role of the leader is to insure his officers and men are given realistic training in peacetime. Foch recognized that just as a leader must prepare himself to command through analysis of historic case studies, so too an army must prepare itself for battle through realistic exercises and maneuvers. He believed that those officers and men who could become familiar with tactics on the practice field would perform them smoothly and confidently on the battlefield and thereby fortify their own moral strength and weaken that of the enemy.

Such tactics (firing on the attack) are capable of ensuring the efficiency, duration and violence of fire required, owing to a constant direction given by a commander previously taught in training camp to practice the technique of fire and owing to the direction received by men previously exercised in the same training camps to practicing the mechanism of fire in war. Thus do exercises carried out in peacetime prepare troops in the highest degree for performing on the battlefield (5:210).

The fact that it is impossible to secure fully in peace the results of true action must not prevent our trying to reach it in training practice (5:330).

In further analyzing Foch's concept of leadership as depicted in "The Principles of War," the author found several recurring traits which the Marshal seemed to associate with effective leadership. Foremost among these was intelligence. He believed a successful leader must demonstrate a high degree of intelligence in handling his forces. He must have a sound grasp on tactics and know how to employ his troops to the best advantage. He must know his men and their individual capabilities and limitations, how much he can expect from them and how hard and far he can push them physically and spiritually before they must be relieved. He must understand the weapons at his disposal, their function and operation, and how to use them to produce the greatest moral and material effect. He must understand how to recognize and utilize strong points in both offensive and defensive operations. He must understand his mission, his commander's purpose in assigning it, the desired result to be achieved and the technical means of achieving it. He must not only have a willingness to obey but also the intelligence to carry out his orders despite the difficulties he may encounter.

The commander must be aware of the results aimed at, the technical means of attaining them, also of the practical means of directing troops in action, of employing them; of enabling such troops to last out and produce an effect, and this inspite of physical fatigue, of nervous excitement, of confusion. . . (5:203).

In discussing what an enlightened commander is, Foch wrote,

It means a commander possessing a theory of fire, knowing its effects, how to secure those effects; it also means a commander who knows how to use skirmishing fire, individual fire, rapid fire, volley fire, fire along the line, etc; he must also know from experience in what measure and for how long a time his men are capable of supplying the result demanded, of keeping their self-control, of obeying; after what length of time nervous tension and physical fatigue will have to be taken into account; how the men may then be pulled up (5:199).

Foch also believed that to complement the intelligent use of his forces, an effective leader must also display sound judgment. He cannot be a slave to the letter of the law of his orders but rather must understand the purpose of his

mission and follow the spirit of his commander's intentions. He must read the circumstances of the situation (i.e., weather, ground, enemy dispositions), apply sound reason and thereby find the most effective way to fulfill the purpose of his mission. He must be able to think clearly, to reason under pressure, always keeping in mind his objective and the capabilities of his men and those of the enemy. He must show initiative and daring but his actions must be tempered by good sense and order.

A commander must not only be a man of will but must also be capable of understanding and of combining (altering tactics based on sound judgment) in order to obey (5:100).

An effective leader must also possess a deep moral courage. He must always be optimistic and aggressive, with the spirit and the will to conquer. He must be unafraid to lead his men, displaying not only physical courage in battle but also the courage to make those difficult and time-constrained decisions which are required of a commander. He must never lose his faith, for he is the one who must strengthen the morale of his men even at the darkest hour.

When the moment comes to make decisions, face responsibilities, enter upon sacrifices. . . where should we find a man equal to these uncertain and dangerous tasks were it not among men of a superior stamp, eager for responsibilities? He must indeed be a man, who deeply imbued with a will to conquer, shall derive from that will the strength to make an unwavering use of the most formidable rights, to approach with courage all difficulties and all sacrifices, to risk everything. . . (5:289).

No victory is possible unless the commander be energetic, eager for responsibilities and bold undertakings, unless he possess and can impart to all the resolute will of exerting a personal action composed of will, judgment and freedom of mind in the midst of danger (5:290).

In addition to possessing moral courage, a leader must also have the ability to inspire his men; to share with them his spiritual power and his confidence; to give them the moral strength needed to advance in the face of the enemy.

To think and to will, to possess intelligence and energy will not suffice for him (the leader); he must also possess the gift of communicating his own supreme energy to the masses of men who are, so to speak, his weapon (5:287).

Is it not this influence of the commander, the very enthusiasm delivered from him, which alone can explain the unconscious movements of human masses, at those solemn moments when, without knowing why it is doing so, an army on the battlefield feels it is being carried forward as if it were gliding down a slope (5:289)?

A leader, according to Foch, must also be devoted to his duty. He must be disciplined and must demonstrate an active obedience to the orders of his

commanders. To do less than actively pursue one's orders to the best of one's ability and to the limits of one's resources is an act of indiscipline and insubordination.

To be disciplined does not mean one only carries out an order received to such a point as appears to be convenient, fair, rational, or possible. It means that one frankly adopts the thoughts and views of the superior in command and that one uses all humanly practicable means in order to give him satisfaction (5:102).

As can be seen over the last few pages, Foch's concept of leadership during his days at the French Staff College was imbued with his strong belief in moral force and an aggressive spirit of the offensive. He saw six key roles for the leader: to prepare himself for command; to create and maintain discipline; to instill and strengthen morale within his unit; to lead his men in battle; to encourage subordinates' initiative by defining results to be achieved; and to realistically train his men in peacetime. He also highlighted five key traits of an effective leader: intelligence; judgment; moral courage; ability to inspire; and devotion to duty.

Foch's second book, published only one year later, was "On the Conduct of War." This too was a collection of Staff College lectures and it seemed to pick up Foch's message of moral strength and offensive spirit where "The Principles of War" left off. More practical and less philosophical in his second book, Foch analyzed the successes and failures of the French and German High Commands' application of the principles of war in the opening weeks of the Franco-Prussian War. After reviewing in detail the German strategic plan of action, comparing the execution of both the French and German plans and discussing the key battles, Foch drew several conclusions (9:19). He found, that while the Germans failed to practice the principle of strategic security by not employing an advanced guard and exposing themselves to great risk, the French lacked initiative and a proper knowledge of warfare and therefore missed every opportunity to take advantage of German mistakes. He also found that the German execution of their flawed plan was saved by the initiative and offensive spirit of their field commanders. The French, on the other hand, were doomed from the outset due to their indecisive and defense-minded leaders (4:280).

From the fragmentary direct quotations obtainable, "On the Conduct of War" appears to echo very clearly Foch's concept of leadership as expressed in his earlier book.

One may well agree that the repeated attacks just described (the Battle of Vionville-Mars-la-Jour) did not break the enemy; but up until the last moment they asserted the German will, the right and the ability to attack which kept the French on the defensive and forced their commander-in-chief to concentrate on protecting his line of retreat. There stands out the magnificent lesson, the paraphrase of the well-known principle: 'The best method of defense is to attack' and even 'the weaker one is, the more should one attack' (9:21).

This sums up the conduct, first of General Alvensleben (Commander, German 3rd Corps) and then of Prince Frederick Charles (Commander, German 2nd Army). As we have seen they were inspired by a superb logic, accompanied by virile decisions, and with a gift of leadership which can spur on the most exhausted troops to further efforts (9:21).

Singleness of purpose, activity, initiative, confidence and mutual support, these are the qualities which inspire the Prussian Army at all levels. . . Everyone is prepared to act and to make decisions (9:20).

. . .if only the French troops had had leaders gifted with the qualities of initiative, decision and mutual support which inspired the Prussian generals. Once again victory went to the leadership which was most worthy to command it (9:20).

Foch's third work "Precepts and Judgments" was published in 1919 at the height of his international popularity. Although this book is purported to be an original of Ferdinand Foch, it appears to be an edited collection of extracts from his first two books and seems to reflect very few, if any, new thoughts. Major D. Grasset, the editor, began the book with a lengthy biographical sketch of Marshal Foch, concentrating on his actions during the First World War. This is followed with an alphabetical listing of eighty-three precepts, which in an encyclopedia-like form, expresses many of the basic topics of which Foch wrote in his first book (e.g., the advance guard, the art of command, discipline, inspiration, military spirit, strategy and tactics). Following this section is one entitled, "Judgments," which discusses in chronological order the battles Foch used as examples for his principles, starting with the Napoleonic Wars and ending with the Russo-Japanese War. Also included in this final section are selected extracts from his books, on key military leaders and their actions (e.g., Napoleon Bonaparte, Carnot, Moltke).

Foch's concept of leadership as expressed in "Precepts and Judgments" appears to be a virtual repetition of that put forth in "The Principles of War." His emphasis on moral force and the spirit of the offensive is just as strong as before.

The laurels of victory are on the point of enemy bayonets. They must be plucked there; they must be carried by a fight hand to hand, if one really means to conquer (4:105).

An improvement of firearms is ultimately bound to add strength to the offensive, to a cleverly conducted attack. History shows it, reason explains it (4:224).

The human factor already possessed an undeniable predominance over the material factor at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Is it not clear that this predominance is still growing in every way (4:226)?



In discussing General MacDonald's attack at Sussenbrun he wrote,

In summing up, we should find that this decimated force (MacDonald's) was able to beat the decimating one; moreover, this decimated force determined the forward movement of the whole army, the victory on the wide Marchfeld. This result was not secured by physical means - these were all to the advantage of the vanquished - it was achieved by a purely moral action, which alone brought about decision and a complete decision (4:104).

In discussing the leader's role in preparing for command he wrote,

The truth is, no study is possible on the battlefield, one does there simply what one can in order to apply what one knows. Therefore, in order to do even a little, one has to already know a great deal and to know it well (4:175).

Strategy is but a question of will and common sense; in order to keep that double faculty in the field, you must have fostered it by training, you must possess a complete military culture, you must have examined and solved a number of concrete problems in your art (4:197).

In discussing the leader's role of stimulating initiative in his subordinates, he wrote,

The power to command has never meant the power to remain mysterious, but rather to communicate, at least to those who immediately execute our orders, the idea which animates the plan (4:147).

The art of command is not of thinking and deciding for one's subordinates as though one stood in their shoes (4:95).

(This denies) every inferior the right to think or to act without an order. . . There results in those inferiors an inveterate habit of blind obedience, inert, complete. . . It involves inactivity, inaction and at last an abandonment of the offensive idea, for the subordinate, left without action during the greater part of his career, cannot become a chief with the faculty of decision. This method suppresses personality and initiative (4:161).

In discussing the importance of intelligence to the effective leader, Marshal Foch wrote,

Victory always falls to those who deserve it by their greater strength of intelligence and of will (4:209).

In discussing the leadership trait of sound judgment he wrote,

(The subordinate commander) must bring to fruit, with all the means at his disposal, the scheme of the higher command; therefore he must, above all, understand that thought and afterwards make of his means

the use best suited to circumstances - of which, however, he is the only judge (4:182).

So true is it that the art of fighting does not consist, even with the most eager and energetic chief, even when the best troops are available, in falling on the enemy blindly (4:243).

In addressing the importance of a leader's moral courage and his ability to inspire his subordinates, Foch discussed the German use of moral force to secure a victory in the Battle of Razonville, August 16, 1870.

It was necessary, therefore, that the will of the General should not be overborne by the exhaustion of his troops. On the contrary, his will had to find some way of using the last gasp of energy in his men and horses; he had to ask of them one last supreme effort to march against the enemy (4:208).

By inspiring his physically and morally exhausted men, the German commander was able to strike the French before they could attack him and thereby secured victory. In discussing the importance of devotion to duty, he wrote,

In a time such as ours when people believe they can do without an ideal, cast away what they call abstract ideas, live on realism, rationalism, positivism. . . there is only one means of avoiding error, crime, disaster, of determining the conduct to be followed on a given occasion. . . this is the exclusive devotion to two abstract notions in the field of ethics: duty and discipline (4:150).

Foch's final book, "The Memoirs of Marshal Foch," was written during the last years of his life, and published after his death, in 1931. Primarily a description of his wartime experiences during the first and last years of the First World War (the intervening three years were covered briefly by the editors), it is extremely detailed, with lengthy references to such military matters as individual unit actions, enemy troop movements and specific orders given and received. It does, however, give a good indication of how his views were altered concerning moral and material force and an offensive strategy.

Foch was deeply marked by the bloody battles of World War I and the large number of brave Allied soldiers who gave up their lives charging materially superior German positions. Although he kept his belief in the importance of moral courage and the gaining and maintaining of a moral ascendancy over the enemy, he elevated the importance of material force to equal that of moral force. He finally acknowledged the importance of the machine gun, heavy artillery and the effective use of fire support in both offensive and defensive operations. Similarly he tempered his attitude on the importance of defensive operations. While he still believed that victory could only be gained through offensive action, he recognized the criticality of a reasonable blend of both offensive and defensive elements in a winning strategy. Through the following quotations from his memoirs, it is easy to see the significant adjustments this prophet of offensive action and moral force made from his earlier position on these topics.

Above all, the doctrine of the offensive, through having been so greatly accentuated and generalized, tended to impose an invariable rule leading too often to tactics that were blind and brutal (3:1vi)

There had been deduced. . . a single formula for success, a single combat doctrine, namely the decisive power and offensive action under resolute determination to march on the enemy, reach him and destroy him, to carry out this idea, formations of attack had been devised that would enable fresh men to be constantly fed into the line. Nothing had been so persistently preached to generals and regimental officers as well as to private soldiers as the power of morale, and above all the will to conquer; and this had been done with a total absence of either qualification or discernment (3:lvii)

In 1870 our High Command perished through its attachment to the defensive, and passive defensive at that. In 1914 it was destined to meet with useless repulses and cruel losses as a consequence of its exclusive passion for the offensive (3:lvii).

Let us point out once again that the idea, the technique, and the practice of the defensive should be familiar to every commanding officer (3:lx).

The fighting around Ypres once more proved the strength which the defensive had acquired through the development of firepower, and especially machine guns. The offensive had not gained in any similar proportion (3:178).

In other words, materiel had taken on a character of vital importance in the war (3:179).

Even in light of his modified views on material force and the defensive elements of strategy, Foch's concept of leadership during his later years remained very close to that expressed in his earlier works. Heavy emphasis was still placed on the attributes of moral courage, judgment, and initiative and on the leader's role in inspiring his men and personally leading them in combat. Regarding moral courage on the part of the leader and his ability to inspire his troops, Foch wrote,

The more anxious and disquieting the situation of his own troops may be and the more critical the moment then facing him appears, the more urgent it is for any commander to push forward with unshaken energy his share in the general operation. He must not let himself be influenced by the uncertainties and dangers of his own particular situation. . . It is his duty to search his mind and call upon its imagination for the means which will enable his troops to hold out. . . (3:120).

The progress once more hinges upon the activity of commanders and the endurance of the troops; the latter is never found wanting whenever an appeal is made to it (3:411).

Also of critical importance to the elder Foch was the initiative of the leader, who understanding the general nature of his orders, must stay alert, take advantage of battlefield circumstances and continually move his troops forward.

In modern war all ranks have their allotted parts to play for which something more than bravery and discipline is required; leaders must not only know their business thoroughly, they must also be capable of exercising initiative (2:xliv).

Concerning judgment, a leadership attribute which seemed to grow in importance as Foch aged, he wrote,

As time went on, our tactics became adapted to the new conditions (of war), but even now our general officers could not fail to be impressed by the necessity of restraining the impetuosity of their troops and of organizing their operations with the greatest of care (3:15).

Also of increasing importance to the Marshal was the key role the leader must play in leading his men in combat. He stressed that the leader must be on the scene, not only to encourage his men but also to interpret battlefield opportunities so as to take advantage of battlefield conditions. In discussing the Franco-American offensive in the Argonne he wrote,

Those in command, too distant from the action, did not seem to personally push it with the utmost energy, by themselves supervising the execution of their combinations. Therefore, General Petain was asked to give instructions to the High Command with a view to ensuring at the present stage of the war of movement, a personal and active direction of the battle on the terrain itself. . . Encourage, inspire, watch over, supervise still remain its (the High Command's) chief task (3:414).

As was made clear through analysis of his books, Foch's concept of military leadership was founded on a deep belief in moral strength and an aggressive spirit. He believed that to be effective a leader must possess a spiritual strength, a will to overcome any obstacle, and that any leader who could not show confidence in himself and his mission could not succeed. In his earlier writings Foch seemed to accentuate positive thinking almost to the point of mind over matter, so much so, that in his later years he toned down this emphasis in deference to such traits as judgment and intelligence. Never the less, he always retained moral strength as the very core of his concept of effective leadership. The same holds true for his fundamental belief in the leader's need for an active, aggressive spirit. Although over the years he tempered his support for an all-out, aggressive leadership style by extolling the need for sound judgment, he never stopped stressing the critical importance of maintaining a proactive versus a reactive style. To Foch, a leader must always be animated by an active spirit not a passive one. He must always seek out ways to accomplish his mission better, smarter, faster, safer, etc., not because he is ordered to do so but because it is in his very nature to do so. Even in discussing self-discipline, Foch stressed the need for an active

obedience to one's superiors, citing passive obedience as leading to insubordination.

Throughout his career, Foch also stressed the critical importance of intelligence. A leader must have a thorough understanding of his profession, of how to employ his men, his weapons, etc. in order that he might lead his troops effectively and confidently in battle. To prepare himself, a leader must take the time to study and to reflect just as he must take the time to train his men, to help them practice the techniques they will use in combat. He must instill in them an active discipline, a willingness to find a way to accomplish the toughest mission and the moral strength and courage to carry it out. He must show initiative and encourage initiative in his subordinate officers and must be truly devoted to his duty.

To briefly reiterate, Marshal Foch saw six primary roles for the leader: preparing oneself to command; leading troops in battle; instilling discipline; building morale; encouraging initiative; and training one's troops effectively. He also saw six key traits of effective leadership: moral courage; intelligence; judgment; initiative; inspiration; and devotion to duty. It was these fundamental beliefs which framed Ferdinand Foch's concept of effective military leadership.

## Chapter V

### A Composite Leadership Concept

Colonel Ardant du Picq and Marshal Foch were French military officers of different generations and of significantly different experience bases, yet each derived a very similar leadership concept. The purpose of this chapter is to compare the similarities and differences in their approaches to leadership and to describe that general concept of military leadership which, as a result of their efforts, dominated French military thinking during the closing days of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century.

The most fundamental difference in the approach of these two great thinkers was their initial focus on leadership. The capabilities and needs of the individual soldier were always the starting point for any discussion on leadership by Ardant du Picq. He saw the individual combatant as the building block upon which all military plans and actions and all leadership decisions must be based. Thus, with the rank and file soldier as his primary focus, he viewed the role of the leader as being derived from the abilities and inabilities, the strengths and weaknesses of his men. For example, since men are overcome with fear in combat, he believed a primary role of the leader was to instill confidence in his men to help them overcome their fear and to instill discipline to control that fear which could not be overcome.

On the other hand, Foch's central focus in his discussions on leadership was the leader himself. While Ardant du Picq saw war as a struggle among individual combatants, Foch viewed it as a conflict between two great leaders, each with a plan, each directing the maneuver of men and materiel in order to defeat the other. To Foch, the roles of the leader were based upon what is necessary to carry out the game of war: a leader must train his army with realistic tactics; he must lead his troops in battle; etc.

These different starting points in their approach to leadership effected the level of leadership about which each spoke. Ardant du Picq, with his emphasis on the individual combat soldier, tended to discuss leadership in terms of small unit commanders, (e.g. companies, battalions). Foch, however, spent much of his time discussing commanders-in-chief, generals, and commanders of armies and army groups. Thus, Ardant du Picq's emphasis was primarily on the relationship between officer and enlisted and Foch's on the commander and his subordinate officers.

This difference of focus also led to several subtle differences in approach even in those areas each saw as critical to effective leadership. For example, both viewed instilling discipline as a critical role of the leader. To Ardant du Picq, rigid discipline and unit cohesion were the key factors which held a

unit together in combat, which allowed the individual soldier to control his fear and continue to fight. He therefore emphasized the leader's role in instilling and maintaining strict discipline among his men. Foch also viewed discipline as essential but emphasized not rigid discipline among the rank and file but rather an active obedience among one's subordinate officers, a willingness to find a way to get the job done.

The impact of their different focus can also be seen in their approach to employing troops. Ardant du Picq emphasized the need for the leader to gauge the moral and physical capabilities of his men so that he would not order them to do something of which they are incapable. He also emphasized the need for the leader to care for his men, to insure they have enough to eat, a place to sleep, etc. Foch, on the hand, spent little time addressing the needs of one's men. Rather he emphasized that a leader should strive to know the abilities of his men so that he would know when to inspire them and when to encourage them into giving their last ounce of energy.

In light of these key differences in approach, how then did both men derive such a similar concept of military leadership? The answer lies in their central belief in moral force. Both Ardant du Picq and Foch built their leadership concepts around the central themes of the superiority of moral over material force and the power of the offensive over the defensive. Both believed that combat is a struggle of wills and the stronger always breaks the weaker and becomes victorious. As a result, they both argued that the leader must do all in his power to build and then strengthen the moral force of his unit.

In analyzing the similarities between Ardant du Picq's and Foch's beliefs on the role of the leader and those traits which contribute to effective leadership, it should be possible to establish the central leadership beliefs of the generations of French military officers whom they greatly influenced in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The writings of these two thinkers tend to indicate agreement of five key roles of the leader and five essential leadership traits.

The first key role of the leader is to prepare oneself and one's men for the rigors of combat. This involves, first, extensive study and reflection on past battles in order that the leader might learn how to employ his troops and how to anticipate the actions of the enemy. Next, having studied the principles of war, the leader must provide realistic training for his officers and his men, aimed at allowing them to become familiar with the tactics they will employ in combat. This training opportunity should also allow the leader an opportunity to learn the capabilities and limitations of his men and equipment.

The second key role of the leader is to inspire one's men. Both Foch and Ardant du Picq believed moral force to be the heart of combat capability. The leader has the responsibility to encourage his men, instill in them confidence, build their morale and inspire them even under the most difficult circumstances. Both men believed it was critical for the leader to be able to share his confidence with his troops. The leader must be able to energize them with an indomitable will to overcome any obstacle.

A third essential role of the leader is to instill discipline. Although Ardant du Picq focused on the leader's role in maintaining a rigid discipline among the rank-and-file and Foch on encouraging active obedience among subordinate officers, both men agreed that discipline remains the lifeblood of command and that it is the leader's role to strengthen and maintain it. They saw the fourth essential role of the leader to be the leading of one's men in combat. They believed that a leader must lead by example, that he must direct his men from up front and not from behind. They agreed this visible leadership, this sharing of the risks, not only inspired the troops and strengthened their moral courage but also put the leader in a position to watch over the action on the battlefield and to take rapid advantage of opportunities as they occur.

A fifth and final essential role of their leader is to encourage the initiative of one's subordinate officers. Both Ardant du Picq and Foch firmly believed that stifling junior officers only killed their potential for future leadership roles. They believed a leader must issue orders of a general nature, explaining only the result to be achieved and the roles various sub-units will play. In this way, the leader allows his subordinate officers to select the best means of carrying out their orders and thereby encourages both initiative and innovation.

In addition to these five essential roles of the leader, Colonel Ardant du Picq and Marshal Foch emphasized five key traits as contributing significantly to effective leadership. The first was moral courage. They believed a leader must have a spiritual toughness which would allow him to demonstrate optimism and confidence even under the most challenging conditions. This inner strength would also allow him to approach the toughest problems with the decisiveness and the courage to take risks and to display physical courage while leading his men in the face of the enemy.

A second key trait was sound judgment. They believed the leader must be able to think clearly and logically even under the most difficult circumstances. He must be able to effectively balance bravery and initiative with calmness and prudence and be able to accomplish his objective quickly but at the lowest reasonable cost. A third trait emphasized by both writers was intelligence. They stressed that to be effective a leader must know how to employ his troops, how to use arms and ground, how to gauge the capabilities of his men, and how to predict the actions of the enemy. He must also understand his orders, the role he is to play, and the intentions of his commander.

They saw devotion to duty as the fourth key leadership trait. To be effective a leader must be willing to devote many study hours to learning the art of war. He must then dedicate himself to a spirit of active obedience to his superiors, to striving constantly to improve his performance and to better accomplish his mission. He must also dedicate himself to his men, to insuring the health and welfare of his unit.

A final leadership trait emphasized by both writers was initiative. They believed that to be effective a leader cannot afford to be reactive. He cannot



simply wait for his superiors' directions or suggested solutions to problems, rather he must seek out innovative ways to accomplish his objective. He must have the foresight to plan ahead and to prepare himself and his men for the unforeseen. He must then be able to demonstrate initiative in overcoming the unexpected obstacles which confront him.

Colonel Charles Ardant du Picq and Marshal Ferdinand Foch deeply influenced several generations of French military officers with their persuasive teachings on the superiority of moral force and the importance of an aggressive, military spirit. As a result, the primary French concept of military leadership during the closing years of the nineteenth century and the opening two decades of the twentieth century was centered around five key roles and five essential traits of leadership. These essential roles of the leader were to prepare oneself and one's troops for the rigors of combat; to inspire one's men and strengthen their moral force; to instill discipline; to lead one's men in battle; and to encourage initiative in one's subordinate officers. The five key traits of effective leadership were considered to be moral courage; sound judgment; intelligence; devotion to duty; and initiative.

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